

## **FY 2011 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Park and Recreation Commission**

Philip V. Robey, Chairman  
Thomas M. Jacob, Vice Chairman  
Cynthia J. Chaston, Member  
Brian S. Nadler, Member  
Michael J. Retzky, Member

Patricia M. Carey, Director  
Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director  
Nicole DiCicco, Recreation Supervisor  
Cassandra Halloran, Administrative Specialist

### **PURPOSE**

Empowered by Chapter 45 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Park and Recreation Commission:

- Provides balanced, year-round recreation programming and leisure services for all ages.
- Serves as steward of over 300 acres of public parkland including the Town Forest; and schedules recreation and athletic facilities.
- Manages Rosemary Pool and Lake as the principal aquatic recreation facility.
- Provides long-range open space and recreation planning.
- Coordinates and provides support services for many community organizations.
- Provides youth leadership training and volunteer resource development.

The five members of the Park and Recreation Commission are elected to three-year terms. The Commission meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.

### **FY'11 HIGHLIGHTS**

The benefits of Park and Recreation services, in communities across the country, are endless, and the Needham Park and Recreation Commission is proud of the partnerships it has developed with many in the Town to enhance the lives of all Needham residents. Fiscal Year 2011 was an extremely busy year at Park and Recreation!

## **Economic Benefits**

- Commission waived Summer Program and Rosemary Pool fees of almost \$30,000 for Needham individuals and families in need of assistance, to enable all to have access to recreation and leisure activities. The amount of requests for programs remained equivalent to the prior summer, but there was an increase in requests for Rosemary Pool passes;
- Commission generated almost \$300,000 in revenue that was deposited into the Town's General Fund;
- Commission conducted annual review of program fees, ensuring that all direct costs were covered by the fees paid by residents who participate in programs;
- Provided staff assistance to the Community Preservation Committee;
- Parent Talk donated financial support for the summer of 2011 Children's Theatre program;
- Needham Cultural Council, Needham Exchange Club, Dedham Institute for Savings Bank, Louise Condon Realty, Middlesex Savings Bank, North Hill, Tom Nutile Band, Needham Business Association, and many Needham residents donated funds in support of the 2011 summer Arts in the Parks concert series. The Needham 300 Trust provided funding for a concert, planned to honor Needham's Tercentennial;
- Assisted with field maintenance projects financed through Field Maintenance Fee, paid by groups using town-owned athletic fields, allowing the DPW Parks and Forestry Division to reduce the damage to fields from overuse. About \$40,000 was collected, an increase from prior years;
- Department offered programs through the use of a revolving fund fees, generating more than \$200,000 in revenue for the cost of running those programs, and fee-based services, including Field Maintenance and Athletic Field lights fees.
- Little League donated new dugouts at the Asa Small Field at DeFazio Park, as part of the field renovation project;
- Booster Club and Fastpitch donated a softball batting cage to Claxton Field.

## **Community Benefits**

- The Department reorganized its staff within its budget, creating the new position of Recreation Supervisor and eliminating the position of Department Assistant. Nicole DiCicco was promoted to become the first Recreation Supervisor, responsible for youth programs and assisting with playground projects;

- Within the reorganization of the department, some duties were shifted from the Assistant Director to add the responsibility of trails coordination. Assistant Director Karen Peirce spent the year attending various training sessions, including Eco-Explorers with staff from the School Department. A trail day was organized in the spring at Ridge Hill that presented educational information, walks, and trail clean-up. In the next fiscal year, a Trails Steward program will be offered;
- Discussions were held with Permanent Public Building Committee on rebuilding of Newman tennis courts after planned use for parking during school construction project;
- After purchasing two parcels of land adjacent to Walker-Gordon Field with Community Preservation Funds, the buildings on the property were demolished to prepare the property to become part of the park. With additional funds from Town Meeting, Walker-Gordon will be renovated in the next fiscal year;
- Developed new material for Town's website for Park and Recreation, Memorial Park and Community Preservation. The website now allows for e-mail notices for special projects, and the department regularly uses ones for Program Information, Field Status, and Fields of Dreams updates;
- With the authorization of the Board of Selectmen, the DPW removed the wooden play structure at Greene's Field, in preparation for a private fundraising effort to replace the structure;
- Department continued to work with School Department on safe playgrounds;
- Due to an appeal to the DEP of the department's permit to drain the Lake, Rosemary Pool could not be cleaned and painted in Spring 2010 as required. Due to a change in the permit status based on the Permit Extension Act, the regular process was followed with additional data collection;
- Assistant Director participated on Eat Well/Be Fit, Needham Committee, including offering a walk for children during the week of walk events called Needham Springs Into Action Week;
- Held Field Scheduling Summits, with sport league officials for ninth year, regarding annual use of athletic fields, and continued long-term project on working with leagues to revise field scheduling policies to relieve overuse of fields and to benefit participants;
- Celebrated the contributions of the DPW to Park and Recreation facilities and projects with "Touch the Trucks," an annual community event;
- The parking lot lights at the PSAB building have provided extended fishing time at the Reservoir;
- Worked with resident sponsored committee studying the concept of a community center;

- Assistant Director served as Chair of the Wellness Subcommittee for Needham's Tercentennial in 2011;
- After serving for eighteen years, Phil Robey retired from the Park and Recreation Commission. He is the longest serving Commissioner, to date. Andrea Shorthose was elected to the Park and Recreation Commission in April 2011.

### **Environmental Benefits**

- Director served on Town's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Committee with the Town Manager, Parks and Forestry Superintendent, Health Director, Conservation Agent, and Supervisor of Custodians, assisting with enforcement of IPM Plan and Child Safety Act;
- With Conservation Commission, reviewed goals in Open Space and Recreation Plan and began to implement;
- Continued implementation of projects listed in completed Trails Master Plan;
- Pedestrian easement created at new development to reach the camp property on Rosemary Lake from Nehoiden Street;
- Assistant Director worked with a variety of organizations and individuals on park clean-up projects, in particular assisting several Eagle Scout (Boys Scouts) and Gold Medal Award recipients (Girl Scouts) with completion of their projects.

### **Personal Benefits**

- Department assisted with Needham 300 activities throughout the year, and with the planning of the final gala to be held in November 2011. Director served as judge at Dancing with the Stars event;
- Director participated and planning and schedule of visit of two government officials from Pakistan, a program sponsored by the Massachusetts Municipal Association;
- Fitness was a key component for many programs, and efforts were made to offer additional tennis classes due to a high number of requests. Tennis-related programs for younger children were increased, providing activities that help teach eye-hand coordination with a racquet;
- The Commission participated in discussions with the Board of Selectmen, Trustees of Memorial Park and School Committee regarding dogs in parks. Town Meeting approved an updated by-law for dogs;

- Bike racks, purchased through a State grant, were installed;
- Assistant Director served as the Town's representative on the Needham Commission on Disabilities;
- Held successful annual Spooky Walk in collaboration with Needham Business Association and annual Fishing Derby at the Reservoir with the support of local fishing organizations;
- Provided assistance to the annual New Years Needham events. The Recreation Supervisor now serves as the administrator for the activities;
- Director and Assistant Director served on subcommittees for the Re-Accreditation of the Senior Center;
- Assistant Director worked with YMCA and Youth Services on annual "Needham Unplugged", including one family night without homework, meetings or events;
- Director, Assistant Director and Recreation Supervisor attended workshops and seminars, including social media, playground safety and ADA requirements, the concerns related to overweight children and obesity; the study of youth sports, integrated pest management, customer service, safe pool operations, creative programming, funding resources and training of staff. Summer supervisors participated in regional training program;